Ambassador’s Speech on Bangladesh Armed Forces Day 2021

- Today’s Guest of Honor, Secretary of the Air Force of the USA, Honorable Frank Kendall,
- Special guest ACM Shaikh Abdul Hannan, Chief of Air Staff, Bangladesh Air Force,
- Excellences, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen,

Assalamu Alaikum and Good evening.

01. I have great pleasure in welcoming all of you to the celebration of the Bangladesh Armed Forces Day. I am particularly grateful to our Guest of Honor, Honorable Frank Kendall for his kind presence, which reflects the strong bonds that exist between the armed forces of Bangladesh and the United States. The Embassy is proud to have the Chief of Air Staff of Bangladesh as our Special Guest. I also express my deep gratitude to all of you for your kind presence this evening.

02. On this occasion, I recall our glorious War of Independence when our common people and men in uniform fought shoulder to shoulder for our freedom and independence. I pay my humble tribute to the founding father of Bangladesh, Bangabandhu Sheikh Mujibur Rahman, who led our War of Independence. I pay my tribute to the valiant freedom fighters – drawn from civilians and uniformed services alike – for their bravery and sacrifice. I also pay my respect to the 3 million martyrs and 200,000 molested women in the War of Independence. Bangladesh stands on their bravery and sacrifice.
03. The Armed Forces of Bangladesh were born through the trials and tribulations of the War of Independence. Their glorious past in defending their motherland, their professional excellence, and their readiness to defend their motherland against any aggression have earned them the respect and admiration of our people. Their role at the time of natural calamities, national emergencies, and in managing relief and rehabilitation activities have earned them the trust and confidence of our people. During the ongoing COVID 19 pandemic, our Armed Forces played a crucial role in enforcing lockdown, providing treatment of patients, and supporting vaccination drive.

04. For many decades, our armed forces have also been playing a larger-than-life role in promoting world peace. Since 1988, Bangladesh has participated in 54 UN Peacekeeping Missions in 40 different countries with more than 175,000 uniformed personnel, including 1,800 plus female peacekeepers. Through participation in UN Peace keeping missions, our armed forces have earned worldwide reputation as dedicated, committed, and efficient professionals. Their good image as peacekeepers is due to their respect for the religious, cultural, and social values of the peoples in countries they serve.

05. On the occasion of the Armed Forces Day, the Prime Minister of Bangladesh, Her Excellency Sheikh Hasina, has praised the members of the Armed Forces for their patriotism, professionalism, and dedication. She has also reiterated her commitment to reconstruction and modernization of the Armed Forces in light with her government’s policy-framework titled “Forces Goal 2030”.
06. Excellencies, Ladies and gentlemen: As we celebrate the Armed Forces Day in the United States, we note with satisfaction the multifaced cooperation between the armed forces of Bangladesh and the United States - cooperation in UN Peacekeeping operations, training, procurement, exchange of information, and very importantly, exchange of visits. Since I joined this Embassy in January this year, I have received the Chief of Army Staff, Chief of Naval Staff and the Chief of Air Staff. This clearly demonstrates the strength of our relationship. We want to see these relations expanding and deepening in the coming years and decades to the mutual benefits of our two countries.

07. Secretary Randall, Air Chief Hannan, Excellencies and our friends from the US administration and the diplomatic community: Thank you once again for joining us. Before I conclude, I want to convey a word of appreciation to Defense Attaché Brig Gen Shahedul Islam for making wonderful arrangement for this evening. Long live Bangladesh-US friendship. [End]